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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: CASC ASEC KPAO PREL MZ
SUBJECT: TRAVEL ALERT - CHILE

¶1. The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the situation in Chile in the aftermath of a powerful earthquake, measuring 8.8 magnitude, that struck 73 miles north of Concepcion (Chile's second largest city; pop. 650,000) and 197 miles south of Santiago. More than 214 people died in the event, hundreds were injured and there has been damage to thousands of homes and commercial properties.

¶2. The Department of State strongly urges U.S. citizens to avoid tourism and non-essential travel to Chile. The February 27th earthquake caused significant damage to the areas closest to the epicenter, including the cities of Concepcion, Talcahuano and Temuco. Santiago, Viña del Mar and Valparaiso were also affected by power outages and limited telecommunications. The Santiago International Airport has been closed to all but military operations.

¶3. U.S. citizens currently in Chile should contact family and friends in the US to confirm their well-being at the earliest opportunity. Where internet and telephone services are not available, it may be possible to contact people using SMS (Cell text message) or other forms of social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

¶4. Strong aftershocks are likely for weeks following a strong earthquake such as this one. The American Red Cross recommends that in the event of an aftershock, persons outdoors should avoid being struck by falling debris by moving to open spaces, away from walls, windows, buildings, and other structures that may collapse. If indoors, DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON: Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there is no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you. Avoid damaged buildings and downed power lines. Great care should be used with matches, lighters, candles, or any open flame in case of disrupted gas lines.

15. Americans living or traveling in Chile are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration website to obtain updated information on travel and security within Chile. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

U.S. Embassy Santiago
Avenida Andres Bello 2800, Las Condes
Santiago, Chile
Phone: 56-2-330 30 00
Fax: 56-2-330 30 05
After Hours Emergency Line: (56-2) 330-3000

16. Travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. For information on general crime and security issues, U.S. citizens should also consult the Department of State's Country Specific Information for Chile as well as The Worldwide Caution located on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website.

17. Minimize considered.

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